

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – APRIL 2004

General Summary. April temperatures averaged 50.9° or 2.4° above normal while precipitation totaled 1.89 inches or 1.44 inches below normal. This ranks as the 38th warmest and 22nd driest April among 132 years of state records.

Temperatures. Warmer than normal weather prevailed for most of the first 8 days of the month with temperatures reaching 79° at Denison on the 7th. April's coldest weather in most areas was from the 9th through the 13th. Cresco reported the lowest temperature with a 15° reading on the morning of the 11th. Above normal temperatures were then the rule from the 14th through the 21st. The month's highest temperatures were 92° readings from Onawa on the 16th and at Rock Rapids on the 28th. Colder than normal weather prevailed for most of the final 9 days of the month with the brief exception of the 28th when temperatures soared to the low 90's at a few far western Iowa locations. The coldest late month temperature was a 24° reading at Waukon on the morning of the 27th. Unusually dry air prevailed for much of April and allowed very wide swings in daily temperature. At Mason City, for example, afternoon temperatures on the 16th soared to 88° following a morning low of only 36°. Similarly, temperatures at Hawarden fell from an afternoon high of 91° on the 28th to a morning low of 33° on the 29th.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 6% less than last April and 14% less than normal. So far this heating season (since July 1, 2003) degree day totals are running 5% less than last season and 5% less than normal.

Precipitation. Extremely dry weather prevailed for the first half of April with a statewide average precipitation of only a trace. Thunderstorms were scattered across Iowa on the 16th, 17th and 18th with statewide rainfall on the 20th-21st and 24th-25th. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.63 inches at Allerton to 4.23 inches at Le Mars. Above normal rainfall was recorded from only 5 of 140 reporting stations, all of which were in northwestern Iowa. At Clarinda their 0.68 inch total was their lowest rain total for April since 1942. Akron was the only location to report measurable snow in April with a 0.4 inch total. Snowfall for the 2003-2004 season; however, averaged 38.3 inches or 5.9 inches above normal. This ranks as the 25th snowiest season among 117 years of statewide snowfall averages.

Severe Weather. Severe thunderstorms were reported from 17 counties from west central to northeast Iowa on the 16th. Another 11 counties reported severe storms across far northern Iowa on the 17th, including the season's first reported tornado. Finally, another 13 northwest Iowa counties reported severe thunderstorms on the 18th. A pair of strong low pressure centers generated high winds across much of Iowa on both the 18th and the 28th with wind gusts over 50 mph common.

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